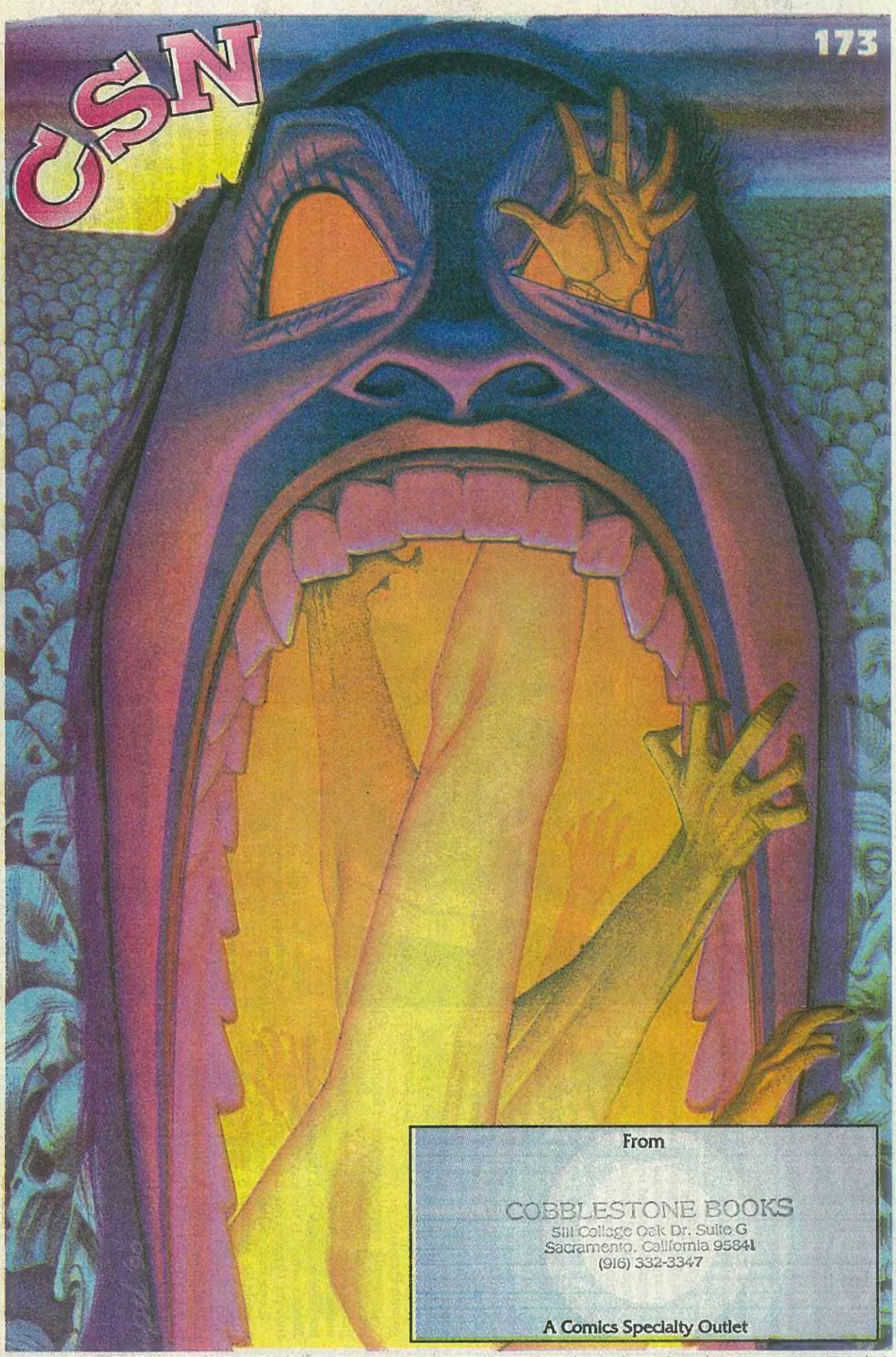

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A Comics Specialty Outlet

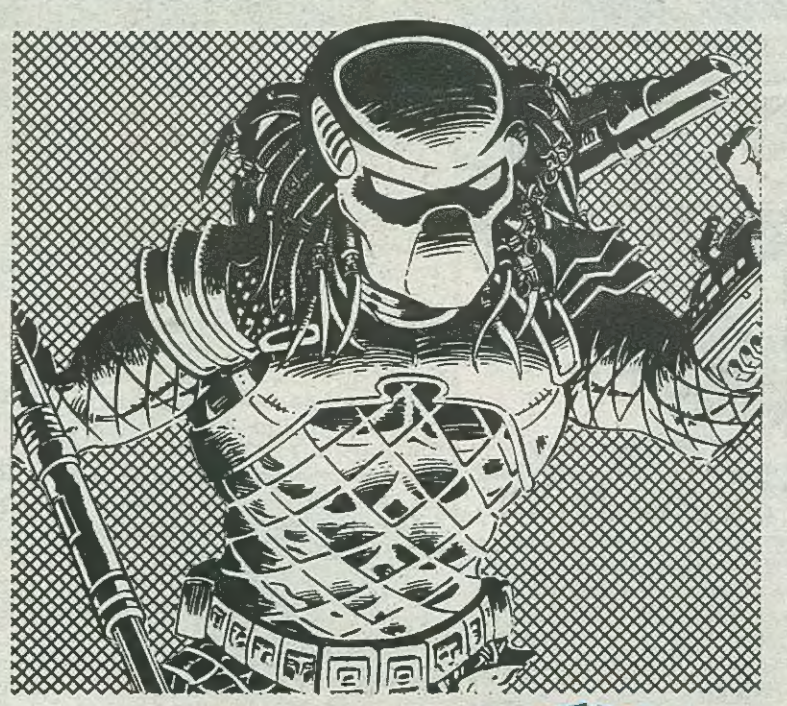
HEMPEL & WHEATLEY'S BREATHTAKING INTERVIEW

Predator Stalks LA in Film Adaptation

Sometimes you can't help but feel sorry for Los Angeles. They already have problems with drugs, crime, traffic, and air quality--they certainly don't need vicious alien hunters stalking the citizenry in the streets to add to the mess.

Whether they need 'em or not, LA is about to get the Predators. We're not talking about a new professional sports team here; these Predators are those ugly alien hunters who menaced Dutch Schaffer (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) in the first film and his brother in the comic book mini-series.

In ***Predator II,*** a Twentieth Century Fox film set for December release, the Predators pay a visit on 1997 Los Angeles, and Detective Mike Harrigan (played by Danny Glover) has to contend with the Predators as well as the war on drugs that normally keeps him busy. The Predators view the violence-torn streets of Los Angeles as a sort of intergalactic Photon game system, so they're having all sorts of fun stalking their game in the California-urban jungle.



The Predators will also be stalking California game in ***Predator II: The Official Movie Adaptation,*** a full-color two issue miniseries that brings the film story to comics beginning this December. Franz Henkel is writing the film adaptation, while ***Flash Gordon*** artist Dan Barry will pencil the adaptation, which is inked by Randy Emberlin.

Predator II: The Official Movie Adaptation is priced at $2.50 per issue; Dark Horse has the comic slated to reach comic shops at the same time the film debuts.

by WAYNE LEE

The Beginning of an Era...

Spirit 74, slated for December release, is the first issue in what Denis Kitchen refers to as the "last era" of Will Eisner's classic series; it begins the "post-Eisner Spirit," when other creators were producing the Spirit because Will Eisner was devoting most of his time to ***P*S*** magazine, a monthly published by the defense department.

The stories are written, for the most part, by Jules Feiffer and Klaus Nordling, while a variety of Eisner studio artists illustrated the Spirit in Eisner's style.

Two of the stories featured in ***Spirit #74*** have never before been reprinted, while the other two were reprinted only once in the early 1950's.

by SUSAN HENDEE

COMIC SHOP NEWS™

173

10 • 17 • 90

No, Not That Demon...

Batman has already met the Demon in the third issue of that new title--but that's *not* the demon referred to in the upcoming Batman graphic novel ***Batman: Bride of the Demon.*** This graphic novel is a sequel to the hit Batman graphic novel ***Son of the Demon,*** and like the first book, it features Ra's al Ghul and his daughter Talia, the woman Batman loves.

Bride of the Demon presents Ra's al Ghul's plan to save our planet from ecological disaster. It's a good plan with a major drawback--its focal point requires the elimination of the majority of the human race. Oh, the world will be a fine place indeed for those who survive...

Batman learns of Ra's Al Ghul's plan and heads to the Antarctic, where he confronts his nemesis and his true love. But is Talia on Batman's side--or on her father's?

Mike Barr, the author of ***Son of the Demon***, is the writer of ***Bride of the Demon*** as well. He is joined by artist Tom Grindberg, whose Neal Adams-ish style has been seen on ***Firestorm*** and ***Checkmate!*** in the past.

Batman: Bride of the Demon, a December 6th release, is priced at $19.95 for 96 pages in hardcover graphic novel format. The week before its release, DC will offer fans a ***Batman: Bride of the Demon*** poster featuring Tom Grindberg's cover for the hardcover volume; this 22" x 28" poster is priced at $6. Previous DC posters released in conjunction with such works as ***Dark Knight*** and ***Arkham Asylum*** have become hard-to-find collectors' items, since DC doesn't keep its posters in print after their initial release.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Full Moon Shines On Eternity Color Comics

Eternity Comics has thus far been known as a black and white company; this winter, though, readers will have to begin thinking of Eternity in a different light. In a joint venture with Full Moon Entertainment, an independent film production company whose movies are distributed on video by Paramount Pictures, Eternity will begin a line of full-color comics based on Full Moon films. The first title in Eternity's new color line will be ***Puppet Master,*** which ***CSN*** first reported on in ***CSN 166.***

The arrangement was made possible through advance work on Eternity's ***Puppet Master*** comic. "Full Moon was very pleased by the quality of the ***Puppet Master*** comic," Dave Olbrich, publisher of Eternity, said. "So pleased that they wanted to use the book as a springboard for a series of comics related to their movies."

The comic book will premiere in comic shops across the country, but it will also be carried in video stores in conjunction with ***Puppet Master II***; Paramount will distribute 30,000 copies of the color comic at the same time the ***Puppet Master II*** film is released.

Eternity, Full Moon, and Paramount are all involved with the promotion of these color books. "This is a true cross-promotion," Olbrich said, "as the comic will function as an advertisement for the movie and the video will serve to advertise the comic. And advertisement for the comic will be recorded on the videotape of ***Puppet Master II,*** which will be released to video stores in early 1991.

Paramount and Full Moon are also producing "movie sized" promotional posters for the comic book series, which should be visible in comic shops across the country. The video posters for ***Puppet Master II*** will carry a blurb promoting the Eternity color comic.

Eternity is quite excited about the prospect of expanding into color comics. "We've been wanting to add color books to our schedule for some time," Olbrich said. He confirmed that Eternity has two other color projects in the works.

Eternity's ***Puppet Master*** comic, written by Dave de Vries and illustrated by Glenn Lumsden and de Vries, isn't just a film adaptation; it picks up the movie's storyline and characters as a launching point for a series of new adventures. "There were some situations introduced in the first film that we've set out to explore more fully," Eternity creative director Tom Mason said. "There are several years of ***Puppet Master*** storylines and any number of directions for the series to go."

Other color projects planned in conjunction with Full Moon and Paramount are comics based on the movies ***Arcade, Sub-Species,*** and ***Dollman.*** ***CSN*** will feature more detailed information on these projects as soon as Eternity finalizes them.

NEWSBRIEFS

HOW TO SAVE $29000 AND CHANGE

When you're thinking of the perfect Christmas gift, nothing seems more appropriate than a copy of ***Marvel Comics #1*** (the title changed to ***Marvel Mystery*** with the second issue). For only $30,000 a pop, you can give a copy of this ultra-rare comic to each and every comics fan on your list.

Okay, $30,000 is a *bit* steep for Christmas gifts--but $17.95 is pretty darn reasonable, isn't it? That's all you'll have to pay to give your closest comics-collecting friends a copy of the ***Marvel Comics #1 hardcover.*** This book features an exact reprint--ads and all--of one of the rarest of all Golden Age Comics. It includes the first appearances of Namor the Sub-Mariner by **Bill Everett** and the Human Torch by **Carl Burgos.** The book will also feature new material by **Roy Thomas, Joe Simon,** and **Les Daniels,** all written to remind you of just how important this book was in comic-book history. ***Marvel Mystery #1*** is slated for November 29th release; be sure to reserve gift copies with your local comic shop as soon as possible (and tell 'em that ***CSN*** sent you!)...

FIRST WITH THE WORST

Fantagraphics was ambitious enough to present a two-volume ***Best Comics of the Decade*** set, and both DC and Marvel have collected their best works into a series of hardcover volumes. But what about the *worst* comics ever published?...

Kitchen Sink ventures where no fan has gone before with ***World's Worst Comics Awards,*** a two-issue limited series that aspires to present the worst that the comics medium has offered in the past quarter-century.

Editors **Jim Schumeister** and **Rich Larson** are setting out to recognize, for once and for all, the worst male and worst female costumes, the worst group, the worst name, and other banes of the comic medium, such as bad science, bad ads, and more. The second issue will even go so far as to name the worst comic book of the last 25 years and the worst comic book of 1990. ***The World's Worst Comics Awards,*** priced at $2.50 an issue, is slated for December and January publication.

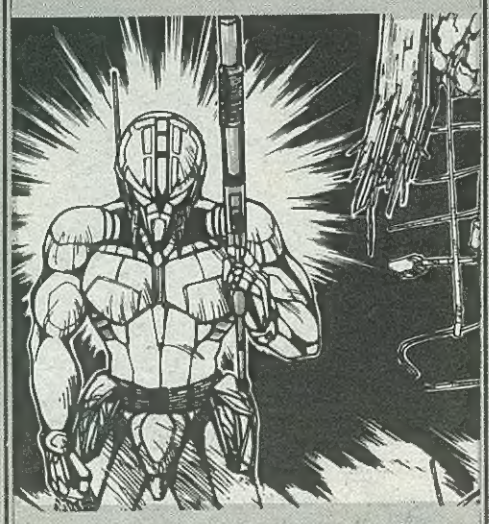
GUICE JOINS SHIELD

Jackson Guice and **John Beatty** have signed on as the new art team on SHIELD beginning with ***SHIELD 20,*** on sale December 20th. That issue, written by **Dan Chichester,** pits Nick Fury and crew against a South American drug lord. Sounds like a pretty easy mission for SHIELD, huh? Well, it gets a little more complicated than that; at the same time, the Red Skull is trying to bring back one of Nick Fury's most deadly adversaries--and while he's at it, he'll help revitalize the long-standing SHIELD nemesis Hydra.

VIZ HEADS FOR THE TOP

Viz Comics already has two different graphic novel formats--but why stop there? A third Viz graphic novel line, Top Graphic Novels, will debut in January. This new format will be used to collect two previous Viz titles, ***Xenon*** and ***Area 88.***

"We have strong hopes for this new line," said Viz publisher **Seiji Horibuchi.** "Sales on both Spectrum Editions and Viz Graphic Novels have been exceedingly brisk and consistent, and we expect the same for our Top Graphic Novel series as well." Horibuchi described the Top Graphic Novels as being similar in size to the smaller Viz graphic Novels, but sans dust-jacket and lower-priced. The first Top Graphic Novel series is ***Xenon,*** beginning in January and continuing on a bi-monthly basis. ***Area 88*** begins in February, alternating with ***Xenon.*** Each volume will contain approximately 180 pages for $12.95.



THE REAL SECRET OF WORLD WAR II

You think those history textbooks have told you how the Allies won World War II? Not according to **Joshua Quagmire,** the creator of ***Uncle Joe's Commie Book.*** According to Joshua, the history texts have been hiding the truth from us; they don't reveal how Cutey Bunny, Li'l Svetlana, K.G. Bear, the T-34, and Howdy Ivan took on the Nazi-Ninja Elves on the Eastern Front to save us all. Worry not, though: Quagmire has the inside poop on the whole affair, and you can find out about it in this adult tale priced at $2; look for it in November from Rip Off Press.

EISNER HITS THE SILK

Will Eisner's work has been presented in signed limited edition hardcover and high-quality litho print format for collectors who want something more than the normal collector's item, but this December will offer collectors of Eisner's art a real first: a chance to own an ultra-limited edition serigraph of the splash page of the May 25, 1947 Spirit section, "Il Duce's Locket." The drawing depicts P'Gell--and, in fact, Eisner regards the story it comes from as "P'Gell's finest hour."

If you don't have a background in art, you might not know what a serigraph is--but perhaps you've heard it referred to as a "silkscreen." The process of serigraphy requires each print to be passed through a silkscreen press once for each color used in the final serigraph. The Eisner serigraph is a ten-color work, so it has to go through the press ten times--and if the print is even the slightest bit out of line (or "off-register"), then that copy must be destroyed.

Peter Poplaski is supervising the color work on this silkscreen, while **Will Eisner** will be signing and numbering each of the 200 copies of this artist's print. The ***Will Eisner serigraph*** is priced at $250 per print. As with all items of this sort, you should reserve a copy of this print as soon as possible--and tell 'em that ***CSN*** sent you!...

BYRNING THE TORCH

John Byrne really likes the Human Torch, it seems: not only is he featuring the original Human Torch in ***Namor the Sub-Mariner #11,*** but he's featuring the modern Human Torch in ***Web of Spider-Man #73,*** which he's guest-writing. This issue features an always-welcome Spider-Man-Torch team-up; it also features cameos by Namor and Willie Lumpkin, the most recent focus of Aunt May's affection. **Alex Saviuk** and **Keith Williams** illustrate the Byrne tale; look for it on December 6th.

A VERY, *VERY* FOREIGN LEGION...

Psychiatrists regularly help people discover and understand their own personal demons. Fran Wilkes isn't sure that the psychiatrists can help her, though--because she's convinced that her demons are absolutely real. Never mind that no one else can see them; she sees them, and she knows that they exist. Asmodeus, Abdiel, Antamon--they all pay Fran a visit at one time or another in ***Legions of Hell,*** a new 8-issue limited series from Trident Comics. Someone else is planning on paying Fran a visit as well: an organization dedicated to fighting the evils of psychiatric treatment. They're willing to use violent means to carry out their mission--and they've targeted Fran as their first project.

Mike Carey, Gary Crutchley, and **Ben Dilworth** are the creators of ***Legion of Hell;*** **Shane Oakley** will supply the cover for the first issue. The 24-page black and white comic is priced at $2.25 and is slated for October release.

CAT & MOUSE SET FOR SECOND YEAR

Roland Mann and **Steven Butler,** creators of ***Cat & Mouse,*** have renewed their series for a second year with Aircel Comics. "***Cat & Mouse*** has been an excellent performer for us," Aircel publisher **Dave Olbrich** said, "and a surprise hit in what is turning out to be a banner year for Aircel. The title has garnered critical praise, terrific reviews, and sales have climbed steadily since the second issue."

"We're confident that the success of ***Cat & Mouse*** is in part due to the promotion and support that Aircel has given us," Mann said. ***Cat & Mouse*** has been so successful that Aircel is already collecting the first four out-of-print issues in trade paperback this fall; furthermore, plans are in the works for a four-issue limited series based on the Demon, a member of the ***Cat & Mouse*** supporting cast.

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NEWSBRIEFS

IT'S ABOUT SADDAM TIME...

So who's the first publisher to get the current Middle East crisis into comics? Well, it's TSR by a nose, with Apple Comics not too far behind. ***Warhawks #3*** from TSR features a new Iraq conflict game, "A Line in the Sand." This stand-alone boardgame by **Paul Lidberg** is based on the current problems in the aftermath of the Kuwaiti invasion. The game deals with the real fears that both sides face in the Middle East, what with the Iraqis have chemical weapons and the US ready to retaliate on a nuclear level. **Flint Dille**, creative director of TSR, said, "We felt that it was important to inform the general public through the medium of a board game about today's events in the Middle East. Hopefully, ***A Line in the Sand*** will give the players a better and clearer understanding of the geographical and strategic realities of the situation. We see this as a valuable educational tool."

In December, Apple Comics will offer ***Winning in the Desert***, a small-sized publication based on the official US Army booklet given to soldiers in the Middle East to prepare them for desert combat; **Don Lomax** supplies the cover for this $2.95 book. You can learn all about Saddam Hussein in ***Iraq Attacks #1***, a carefully-researched history of Hussain from his attempt at age 22 to assassinate the president of Iraq to his current invasion of Kuwait. (You thought Dr. Doom was a pretty diabolical villain?...) This black and white title is priced at $3.95.

Finally, ***Vampiric Jihad*** collects the "Dracula 2199" storyline that tells the story of a future Dracula in control of a Middle Eastern nation; Dracula's plan is to take them up against the forces of the West--and he's using American hostages to protect his nuclear weaponry in an effort to deter any sort of a retaliatory strike. (Say, you think Hussein reads ***Blood of Dracula***, where this story originally appeared?) ***Vampiric Jihad*** is a 48-page comic priced at $4.95.

SHE-HULK STARES DEATHS-HEAD IN THE FACE

Death's Head may not have made many appearances in the first half of 1990, but he's certainly making up for it at the end of the year. First there's the Death's Head: Body In Question graphic novel, then the trade paperback--and now, he's dropping in for a visit with She-Hulk. ***She-Hulk #24***, guest-written by Death's Head creator **Simon Furman** and illustrated by **Brian Hitch**, brings the future bounty-hunter into the present to have a little tete-a-tete with She-Hulk. If you need offbeat villains to make your ***She-Hulk*** reading experience complete, then howsabout Whirlwind, Plantman, Lightmaster, and Radioactive Man? They're all on hand on December 6th.

GIVING THE FLASH A RUN FOR THE MONEY

DC's scarlet speedster ***The Flash*** is getting all sorts of recognition thanks to the success of the CBS television show. The show was the third-highest-rated new series the week it debuted, and has garnered positive reviews from all sorts of publications. So what better time for a ***Greatest Flash Stories Ever Told Hardcover*** edition?

DC is adding a 288-page collection of classic Flash tales from the 40's to the present to its December schedule; the hardcover will feature a foreword by classic Flash artist **Carmine Infantino** (who was mentioned in the recent ***Entertainment Weekly*** review of the television series) and an introduction by series editor **Mike Gold. Infantino, Kanigher, Kubert, Fox, Byrne,** and others are represented in this hardcover, as are such famous Flash cast members as Gorilla Grodd, Elongated Man, Hal Jordan, Vandal Savage, and the Justice Society of America.

The Greatest Flash Stories Ever Told is priced at $29.95, and is scheduled for December 13th release.

At the same time the new hardcover appears on the comic shop racks, you can also pick up a ***Flash Cloisonne Pin***. This 3-color goldtone pin measures 1" in diameter and features the Flash logo with a lightning bolt through it.

The pin is priced at $5.95; as with all specialty items of this sort, you should let your local comic shop know that you're interested in one--and tell 'em that ***CSN*** sent you!

PLAYING HOST TO A GHOST

Moon Knight #25 will be a double-sized issue illustrated by guest artist **Mark Bagley**, whose work has been generating so much excitement over on ***New Warriors***. There'll be another reason for excitement over this issue of Moon Knight: it guest-stars 1990's hot hit hero, Ghost Rider! **Howard Mackie**, regular ***Ghost Rider*** artist, is writing this issue; he's bringing along some renegade worshippers of Konshu who call themselves the Knights of the Moon.

Beginning with ***Moon Knight #26***, the regular team of **J.M. DeMatteis** (who has written such hits as ***Blood***, the Kraven saga in Spider-Man, and various ***Justice League*** books) and **Mark Bright; Tom Palmer** will continue as inker. The first issue with the new team will bring back Stained Glass Scarlet from the original ***Moon Knight*** series--and you can be sure that this means upheaval's in store for Marc Spector's life!

HERE'S A SERIES THAT POSITIVELY CALLS OUT FOR RED

When you think of **Lucille Ball**, you think of red--after all, her famed red hair was a trademark. Unfortunately, recent readers of the ***I Love Lucy*** comic series from Eternity have had to settle for black and white comic strips--but that won't be true in 1991. That's when Eternity will offer a square-bound collection of ***I Love Lucy*** stories in their new ***I Love Lucy in Full Color*** volume.

"Our release date coincides directly with the 40th anniversary of the I Love Lucy television series," **Dave Olbrich** said. "Not only are we offering this terrific collection of stories, but we're presenting them in full color, as they originally appeared." These stories haven't been presented in color in four decades; to commemorate the special status of this book, Eternity is adding a special gold-foil-embossed cover.

"One of the things we're finding with Lucy is instant recognition," Olbrich said. "Thanks to television syndication, Lucy is known worldwide and the show has attracted an avid following and a large collector base." The book will feature five complete stories,

one of which is a Fred and Ethel solo tale. The story has the same sort of zany action that I Love Lucy fans remember from the television series; as a matter of fact, **Jim Korkis**, who provides the introduction to the collection, feels that the book has even more Lucy action in some cases. Korkis says that the comics "were not restricted by the budgets of the television series. These stories allow for adventures from a wild car ride to circus acrobatics that would have been prohibitively expensive for '50s television."

A REAL *MONSTER* PROJECT

Dark Horse Presents #47 is a special theme issue, and the theme is *monsters*. This 32-page no-ad comic will feature a selection of "big, slimy, scaly, teeth-gnashing, tail-thrashing, building-smashing beasties," according to Dark Horse. **Tim Truman** (joined by his son Ben), **Mike Wolfer, Chris Warner, Brian Buniak,** and others offer monster fans an issue-long extravaganza. Buniak contributes the monster-melee cover for this issue, which is slated for December release.

BUMS, BEATNIKS, HIPPIES, ARTISTS, AND CON ARTISTS--WOTTA GROUP!

The already-announced **Ernie Bushmiller** Nancy collection ***Bums, Beatniks, and Hippies*** has picked up some more eccentric--namely, a bunch of artists and con artists! Kitchen Sink has delayed the release of ***Bums, Beatniks, and Hippies*** until December; when the book ships , it'll be published with two covers: the ***Bums...*** cover will appear on one side, while the ***Artists and Con Artists*** will appear on the other.

"The reason for the delay and the additional material?" Well, to be honest, we couldn't find enough bum, beatnik, and hippie jokes to fill the book," **Denis Kitchen** reports. "When Bushmiller used these groups in his strip, the gags were memorable, and led to the false conclusion on our part that there was a motherlode of these strips.

"In fact, there weren't all that many, so we've decided to buttress the subject with Bushmiller's gags about modern art and artists, and other con artists like salesmen and sidewalk vendors. There's plenty of those gags..."

The trade paperback will no appear in mid-December; it will be priced at $8.95.

THIS REALLY SPHINX...

Wolverine had a bad enough time in the "Days of Future Past" storyline that ran in X-Men--but his future looks scarcely better in the upcoming alternate-reality storyline that'll be running in ***New Warriors #11-13***! In this storyline, the new Sphinx has altered the course of history so that Egypt has remained the major world power. No one but Nova realizes that anything's wrong in this world still ruled by things Egyptian--and wait until you get a load of the Egyptian-influenced versions of such heroes as Captain America, Mr. Fantastic, Iron Man, Magneto and--of course--Wolverine. You'll have a chance to see this entire storyline--and the permanent effects it has on Nova--beginning in late March of 1991. All this will be brought to you by the regular team of **Fabian Nicieza** and **Mark Bagley**.

A VALE-D THREAT

If you were threatened by a villain who named himself after a charnel house, wouldn't you be a little concerned? Vicki Vale certainly should be! Abbatoir, a new Batman villain who has been stalking Gotham City's political and social elite, is after the one person who has a clue as to why he's wreaking havoc in Gotham City--so naturally, Abbatoir has targeted Vicki as his next kill. It's up to Batman to find her first in ***Detective Comics #625***, on sale December 6th. **Marv Wolfman, Jim Aparo,** and **Mike DeCarlo** are the new creative team on ***Detective*** beginning with this issue.

CSN SPOTLIGHT

The Two MARKs

BY WARD BATTY

*Marc Hempel and Mark Wheatley have worked in comics, both together and apart, for about a decade now. The pair first drew critical acclaim with their work on **Mars**, an early series for First Comics (and one that is still periodically brought up for trade paperback release). They've also worked on **Blood of the Innocent**, a horror miniseries (also discussed periodically for trade paperback release) that was the forerunner to the plethora of 1980's Dracula stories. They became very well known for their work on Comico's lamented **Jonny Guest** series. Last year, Hempel (working solo) had a major hit with his quirky graphic novel **Gregory**; this year, the two joined forces again for **Breathtaker**, the story of a succubus who's not to happy with her condition and the various men whose life she touches--especially **The Man**, a superhero assigned to capture her. Hempel and Wheatley took a little time from their work at Insight Studios (their production company) to discuss **Breathtaker** and other projects, including **Gregory II**.*

How did *Breathtaker* come about?

Wheatley: ***Breathtaker*** wasn't begun as a DC project. The book ended up at DC Comics because I had worked with Mike Gold when we did ***Mars*** for First Comics. The proposal grew out of a request from Diana Schutz for new projects. I put this together, they looked at it and said "no money! We love it, though!" So we sent it to DC and an hour later they wanted to buy it. That was really the first thing that we ever submitted to DC--but it's not the last project we've submitted.

It's a four issue prestige format miniseries that should come out on time. We can pretty much guarantee that, since we do the the story, the art, and the color separations--the whole shebang.

How do you work together?

Hempel: Mark wrote it, I drew it--

Wheatley: And I painted it. This is different than we did with ***Mars***, when I wrote it, then Marc did breakdowns, I did pencilling, Marc did inking and lettering and I did coloring, except on some issues where Marc would pencil the whole thing and I would do breakdowns and write it it...

Hempel: Let's not get into that. It's too confusing, even for me, and I was there.

Wheatley: Okay. Anyway, we do every project differently. I was just inker on ***Blood of the Innocent*** and ***Jonny Guest***.

Hempel: But you were also co-writer.

Wheatley: Yeah, that's true. We'd rather follow our own visions, but the speed required to do comic books makes it important for us to collaborate.

Hempel: Actually, we don't take speed...that's just an ugly rumor.

Hempel: We've also done a few solo stories for Marvel. I did Spider-Man...

Wheatley: ...and I did Dr. Strange.

Hempel: Yes, we're Marvel Madmen and you didn't even realize it.

Wheatley: We're not Marvel zombies, mind you; we're just Marvel madmen. An important distinction that shouldn't be understated.

How does it feel doing a character of your own for one of the Big Two?

Wheatley: The difference, the fascinating thing, is that we expected something and we didn't experience it at all. We expected a bit of pressure to measure up to other people's standards or expectations or requirements, pressure that we wouldn't have had to deal with if we had been working for an independent publisher. The *truth* of the matter is, though, that we got more money, which allowed us to take more time and put more care into the project, and it was really a wonderful experience. I think Mike Gold changed a total of about four words in our stories. People kept telling us that we could expect interference from DC, but I've never been able to do anything in comics that had *less* interference. Most of the "interference" that Mike Gold gave me was actually very helpful. It's what he's supposed to be there for, to find stuff that doesn't work and help it. He helped me bring clearer vision to the work.

As far as the art goes, I don't think we changed--well, we had to change a few lines here and there. We had showed sexual organs at one point, and that didn't make it into the book. Oddly, the original art did make it into DC's slide show before it was changed, so they've shown the art in question in public, they just didn't put it in the book.

Was there any connection with the Gregory deal and the Breathtaker deal?

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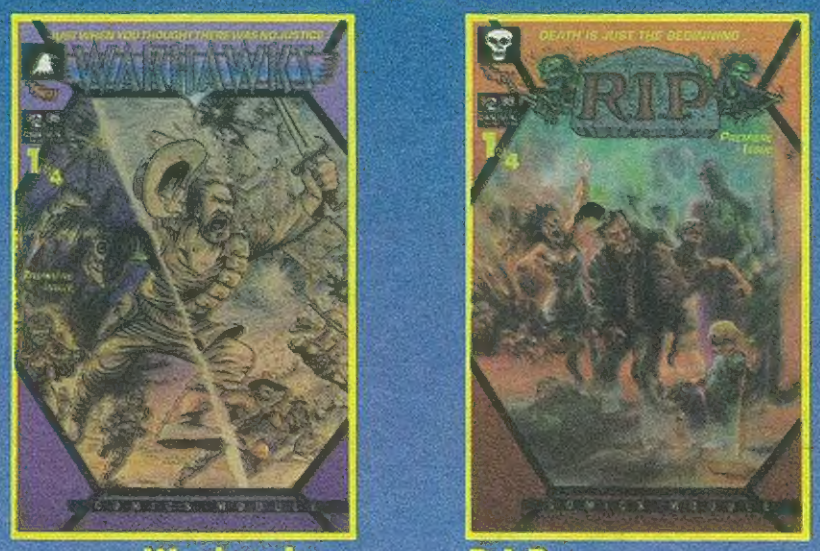

Warhawks— By Roy Thomas & Peter Ledger

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CSN SPOTLIGHT

Hempel: ***Breathtaker*** actually came first, although ***Gregory*** appeared first. It took a long time to negotiate the contracts on ***Breathtaker,*** so I did ***Gregory*** in the interim.

Wheatley: Basically, the idea for ***Breathtaker*** was born in January of 1988. We wrote it in presentable form in March or April, Mike Gold claimed it in mid-May, and then we negotiated contracts until August of 1989.

Wheatley: Both my fans and my fellow professionals are---I'm very flattered to say--very pleased with the project. They all say that it wasn't at all what they expected it to be.

Hempel: Most people claimed that they didn't know what to expect, so they got what they weren't expecting.

Wheatley: A lot of people have told us, "It's not the sort of thing I usually pick up, but it's the best thing I've read this year." And I didn't even pay them to say that!

It's an interesting mix of line art and painting.

Hempel: It's different artistically. The painting sequences are television sequences; we use illustrative outline on the actual comic book segments in our comic book reality, but when we go to television, we paint it because television is more real. In our story, The Man has his own television show, his own line of comic books, his own line of books--he doesn't have just *one* comic, he has *three*, because he's a very popular Man.

Wheatley: That's ***The Incredible Man, the Uncanny Man,*** and ***Make Way For The Man...***

We've toyed with the idea of actually doing an issue 137 of ***The Man***--

Hempel: Entitled "If Death Be My Destiny"...

Is there any chance that this will continue as another limited series or an ongoing series in the future?

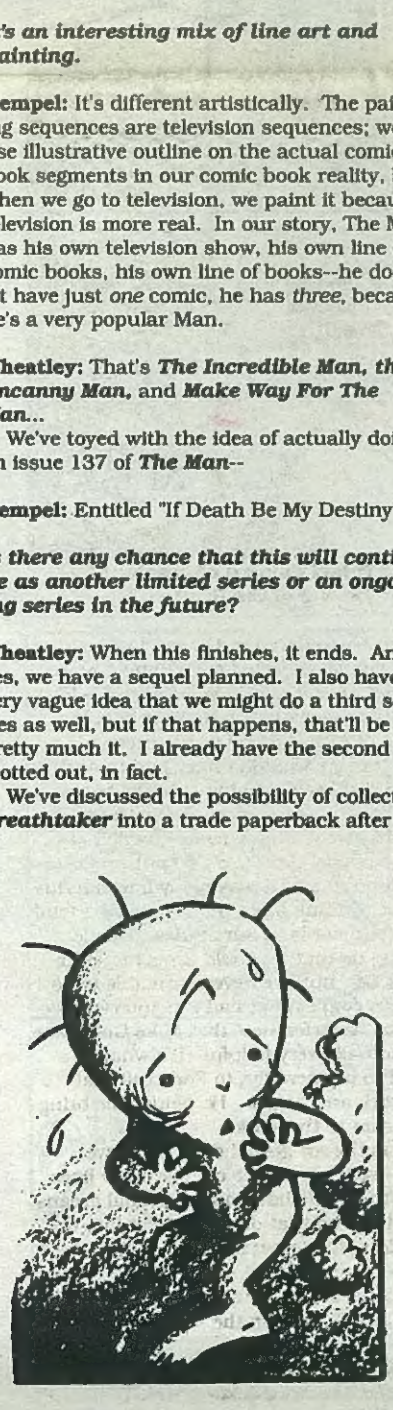
Wheatley: When this finishes, it ends. And yes, we have a sequel planned. I also have a very vague idea that we might do a third series as well, but if that happens, that'll be pretty much it. I already have the second one plotted out, in fact.

We've discussed the possibility of collecting ***Breathtaker*** into a trade paperback after the entire series is completed. One of two things can happen. We are getting reorder activity, and some people say it was really underordered in some parts of the country. The activity over the next couple of weeks will tell us if there's enough interest to actually go back to press on the first issue, which is one possibility, or whether we'll just collect it into one volume sooner than we had planned.

Do you have anything else in the works that you'll be doing together?

Wheatley: *Together*--now there's the key word. No, I don't think we have anything planned together right now. We do have individual projects. Marc's doing another ***Gregory*** volume and I have a large, large, large project for DC that should be out around Christmas of 1991that I can't talk about right now. I'm also going to be working on the characters that DC has picked up from Archie Comics. I'll be writing the Black Hood. I'm revamping that; I've taken the name and started from scratch. It's going to be done under a separate imprint from DC's regular line, but I don't know what that name is.

You mentioned earlier that you provided DC with the finished package, including color separations. How does that work?



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Arthur Adams, Mike Mignola
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CSN SPOTLIGHT

Wheatley: We have a studio called Insight Studios, and we're a full service studio. We were a publisher for a little while. We stopped publishing, but we're *able* to publish. In this case, we're able to supply not only the art and story of the book, but the actual color separation film, all the production material to bring the book about. The book is ours 100% from start to finish; we're doing the packaging, the typesetting, the design--I even went to the printer and saw it done. It's really our project in every regard except the printing, shipping, and promotion.

In the first issue, we used a neon pink ink; the second issue broke with tradition in that it was a black and white cover. We actually used a black ink, a neon ink, and two different UV coats, a gloss and a matte, to create a subliminal message on the cover.

Hempel: That's right, there's a subliminal message on the cover. Look for it!

Wheatley: Since we do our own production, we can actually ask for things like this and see these effects through the way we want to. Everyone at DC has been very helpful, though; Bob Wayne's done a great job promoting the book, Dale Crane's done a great job, Mike Gold's done a great job, it's been great working with Dick Giordano. I'm really happy.

Hempel: What about me?

Wheatley: You've done a great job, too.

Hempel: Good. I'm very happy with it. ***How did Gregory come about, Marc?***

Hempel: I came up with Gregory as the star of a kind of throwaway three-page story that I did for ***Honk*** magazine in 1986. At the time, he looked more adult, with more adult proportion, uglier--well, less cute--than he is now. I just did the story because I thought it was a kick. It was the first version of "It's Spring," to which I added a page to the second version when I included it in the book.

Wheatley: It plays hell with the continuity to do that sort of thing. Now you have to figure out which is the Gregory of Earth I and which is the Gregory of Earth II.

Hempel: Actually, one of them is the Golden Age Gregory. But it'll all be settled in ***Crisis On Infinite Gregories.***

Anyway, he wasn't gregory when I did the ***Honk*** piece. He was just a character. But I came up with more ideas for this character, and I got them out and put them on paper, and before you know it, I had a book.

As soon as I created Gregory, I created Herman Vermin to complement him--

BATMAN™
by Loebs, Infantino & Nyberg
IN THE SUB-BASEMENT OF CITY HALL...
I SEE YOU'RE ALL HERE. THAT'S GOOD.
WE HAVE PLANS TO MAKE.
10-8-90
DID WE HAVE A CHOICE, TWO-FACE?
NO.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLLOWED HARVEY, BUT I MUST KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
THERE ARE TWIN, TWO-HEADED SIBERIAN TIGERS AT THE CIRCUS! THEY MUST BE MINE!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
10-9-90
TIGERS? WE'RE HEISTIN' TIGERS? WHAT'RE THEY WORTH?
A LOT, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THERE ARE TWO OF THEM!
DIDN'T THAT GUY USED TO BE D.A.?
THAT'S THE SWEET PART! HE STILL IS D.A.!
HEY! I HATE THIS! I AIN'T RISKIN' MY SKIN TO STEAL A COUPLE LOUSY TIGERS!
ARE YOU SURE?
10-10-90
UH... WELL, I MEAN ...NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT... IT'S A GOOD IDEA. SURE.
HEY, BOSS. LOOKIT WHAT I FOUND!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
ALICE!
HARVEY! THESE MEN ARE GANGSTERS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
10-11-90
HARVEY DENT IS DEAD. TWO-FACE RULES HERE.
AND THE MEREST FLIP OF A COIN DECIDES WHETHER YOU LIVE OR DIE!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
HARVEY, YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN ...!
HARVEY DENT IS DEAD!
10-12-90
DENT WAS WEAK BECAUSE THE LAW IS WEAK! BUT TWO-FACE HAS THE STRENGTH OF EVIL!
AND NOW FOR YOU...
HA! AND EVIL WINS!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
HARVEY, YOU CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS! YOU NEED HELP!
10-13-90
BRING HER! WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT THE CIRCUS!
AND WE MAY NEED TIGER BAIT! HA!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
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Have you seen anything in this issue of ***Comic Shop News*** that you can't live without? Make sure you don't miss it; clip this handy coupon and write down the things that you want you comics shop owner to be sure to get for you!

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CSN SPOTLIGHT

Wheatley: I've never heard Herman compliment Gregory yet.

Hempel: It's in the second book. Gregory is the spontaneous childlike guy and Herman's the frustrated adult character, and I think they work well together.

I did about forty pages of material, then sent it around to various publishers, both comic publishers and real book publishers. I got some normal rejections and one really nice-- almost a *glowing* rejection, if that makes sense. I got a very good reaction, though, even from the publishers who didn't want the book. Fantagraphics almost went with the project; they were the ones who told me to go to Piranha Press because I'd get a better deal--and they were right!

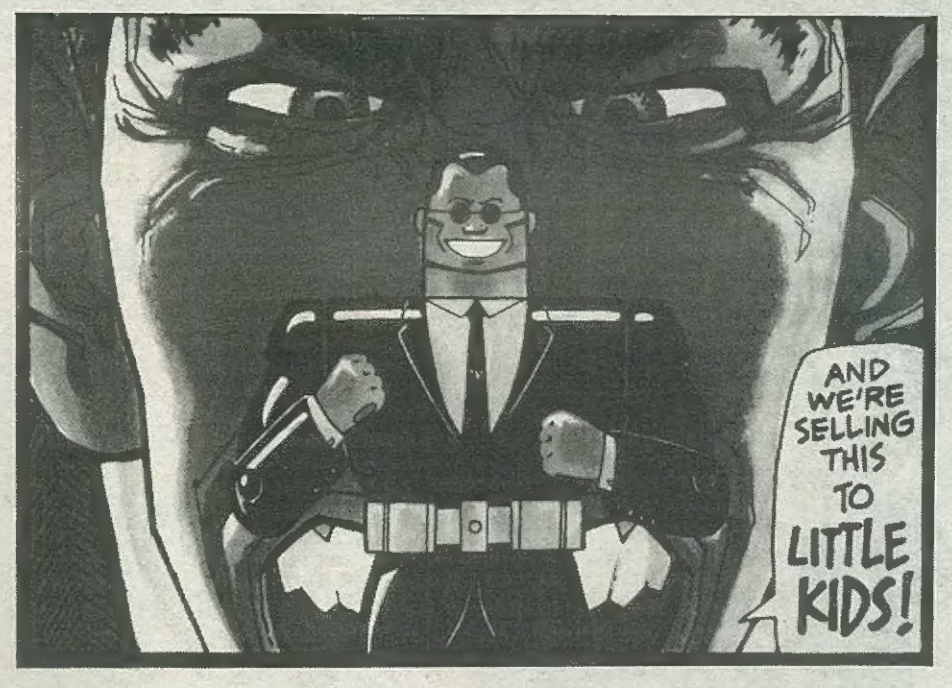
Piranha hadn't published anything when I first came to me to discuss ***Gregory.*** Mark Nevelow had approached me at a convention about doing something, but we didn't talk specifics. As soon as they decided to offer me copyright ownership on ***Gregory,*** I decided to go with Piranha.

I originally saw it as a series of separate comic books, but it seemed to fit the book format better, both conceptually and from a marketing standpoint. It seemed to fit on the bookshelves better with things like ***Calvin & Hobbes***, which is the sort of audience I thought ***Gregory*** might appeal to.

It was *much* better received than I thought it would be, particularly in comic shops. We thought it would fail miserably in comic shops and do alright in regular bookstores; instead, it had to go to a second printing that's 150% the size of the first printing just to meet the demand, so I'm thrilled with it.

I'm beginning work on the second volume of ***Gregory;*** the working title is ***Gregory II***-- pretty clever, huh? Right now, we're debating whether that should be ***two, too,*** or ***to.*** I'll actually start on that as soon as I do the final ***Breathtaker*** pages--

Wheatley: Which he will do very soon.



Hempel: That's right, because I *never* miss my deadlines. The volume should be out in the spring or summer of 1991.

Hasn't there been some Gregory merchandising as well?

The ***Gregory*** t-shirt has sold out of its initial run from Graphitti and is now in a second edition. The second run is done on white shirts...

Wheatley: Fans go for white or black shirts. That's true; it's based on market research by People Who Know!

Hempel: Yeah, some people didn't care as much for the flesh-colored shirts; I don't know, I thought they were kind of sexy.

Wheatley: Yeah, but some people thought that it made it look like you had a Gregory tattoo on your chest.

Hempel: But that was the whole *idea!...*

Some very nice fan made a Gregory doll for me and delivered it to me yesterday; I think I'll use it for an art reference for the next volume. There really has been some talk of actually merchandising a Gregory doll, believe it or not.

Wheatley: A Gregory animatronic would be great. Something like a Gregory version of Teddy Ruxpin.

Hempel: Believe it or not, the option on a ***Gregory*** movie has also been inquired about. There have been some animation discussions, but nothing definite. MTV was talking about it at one point--but I don't know if I can tell you about that... And there's some talk of a ***Gregory*** stage play. If it happens, it'll be produced by Dan Fogel out of San Francisco.

Will it be a musical?

Hempel: I hope not! They tell me that they've got an actor who looks like Gregory--I feel really sorry for the guy... If it does come about, I'll be helping out on the script; Dan will be adapting it from me and I'll be editing him afterwards.

What are you doing, Mark?

Wheatley: I'm working on two very personal projects that don't have publishers yet. I want to have a great deal of material ready before I get them out there: I want to establish what they're going to be. One of them is called ***Cat Control***; it's a suburban fantasy; I'm trying to give the suburbs an identity and to deal with the fact that most people shut off their imaginations as they become adults.

The other project is a continuation of my ***Prince Nightmare*** character. I have a very long story that deals with him as a young adult.

Hempel: I have some other ideas, too, but they're not fully developed enough to talk about. I'm thinking about continuing and concluding the ***Arise Awake*** trilogy that I began back in ***Epic Illustrated*** Magazine. I'm thinking about collecting the original story "Arise Awake," "Year Twenty," which is the sequel, and doing a concluding chapter. We'll see if that gets done or not, once ***Gregory*** is finished.

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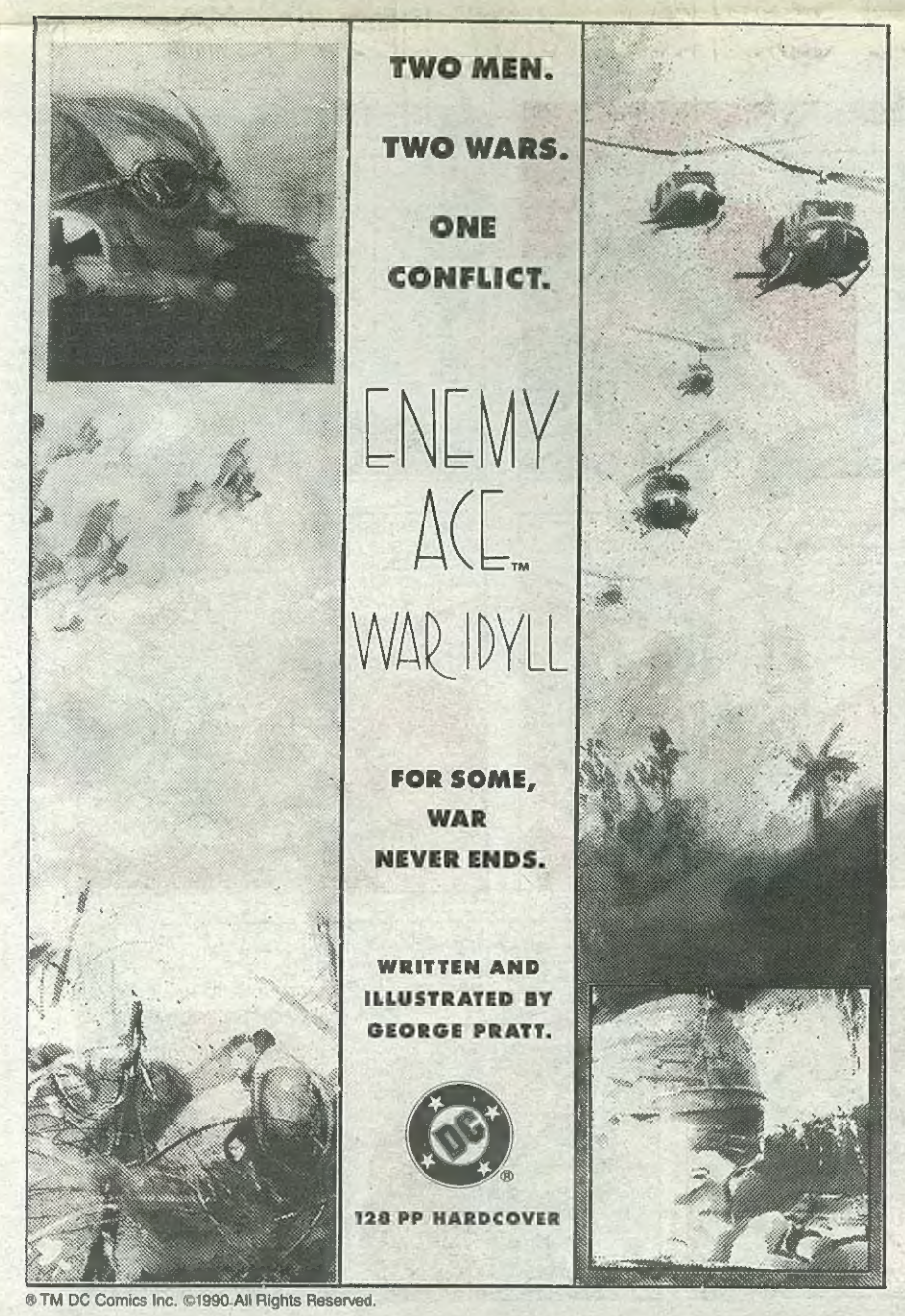

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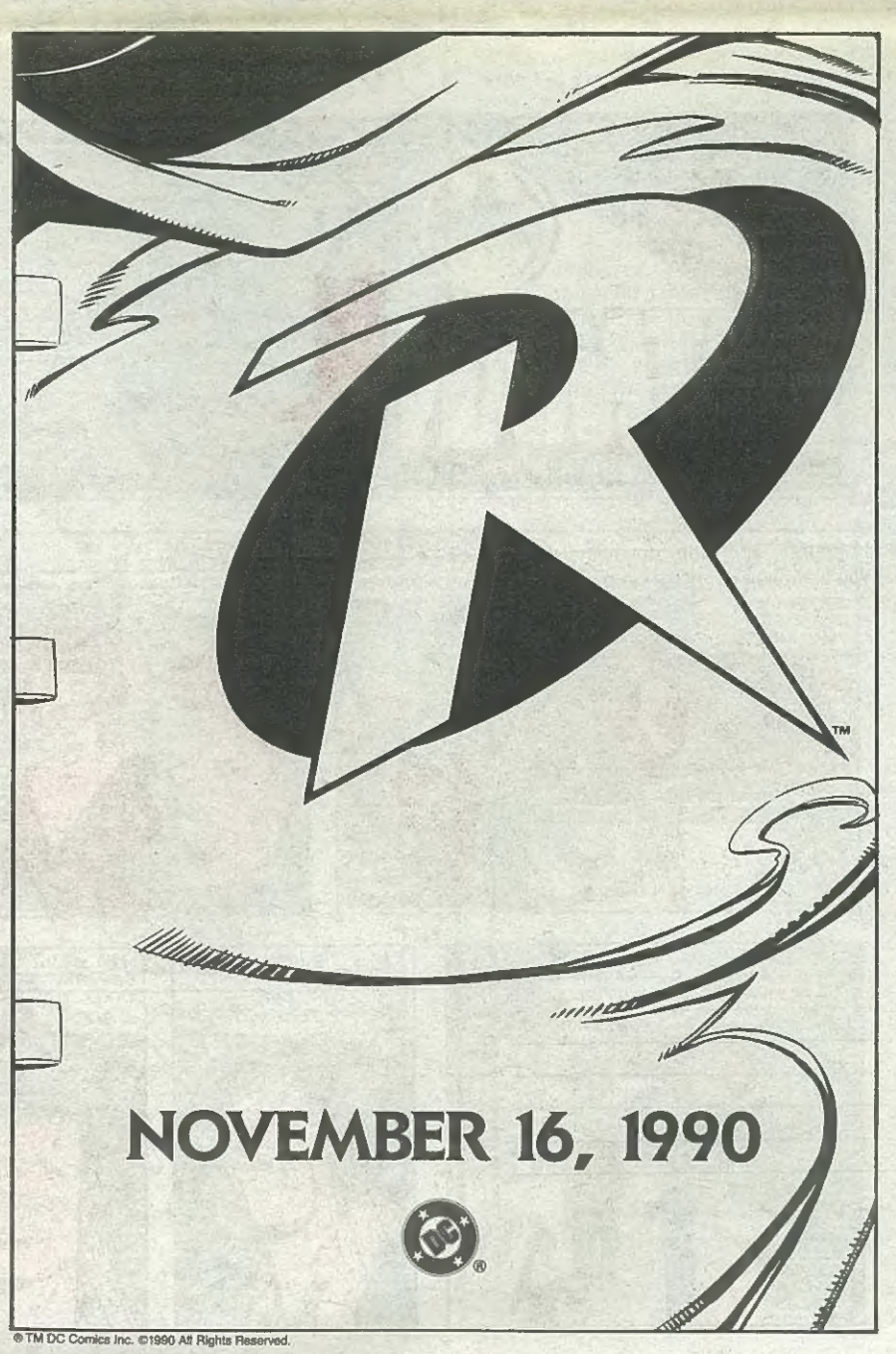

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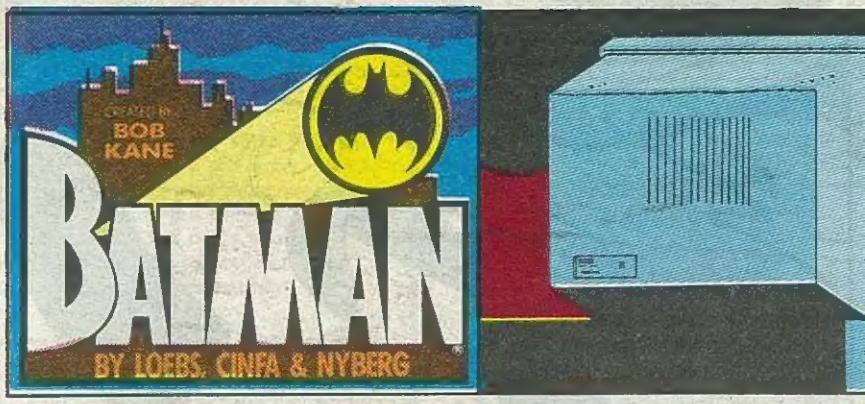
CREATED BY
BOB KANE
BATMAN
BY LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

A WEEK AFTER SGT. LIZ MUNI MET WITH THE BATMAN TO DISCUSS TWO-FACE...
HARVEY, IT'S BRUCE WAYNE. HE'LL BE RIGHT OVER.
WONDERFUL.

THE LAST THING I NEED IS THAT TWIT BOTHERING ME!
BE NICE, HARVEY.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? IT'S A NEW ACT, STRAIGHT FROM RUSSIA! I'M DYING TO SEE IT!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

TWIN SIBERIAN TIGERS, COMPLETELY TRAINED... AND GET THIS-- THEY'RE TWO-HEADED!

NOW WE'LL SEE HOW HE TAKES THE BAIT...!
10-7-90

GEMINI JEWELERS BURGLARIZED...
ONLY 2 CARAT GEMS TAKEN;
POLICE PUZZLED.
TA-DAHH! I CALLED FROM THE CAR!
I WAS SO EAGER TO TALK TO YOU!
THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS LUNCH AND THEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT THE CIRCUS!
THE CIRCUS?
REALLY, TWO-HEADED? HMMMM...
YES, AND I'VE GOT A CHANCE TO INVEST IN THEM!
THIS IS A BIT FLAKY, EVEN FOR BRUCE...AND WHY IS HARVEY LISTENING TO HIM?
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